

TREY's ground rules for volunteer work

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Introduction

The purpose of this document is to describe volunteer work in the Student Union of Tampere (TREY), and to clarify the volunteers' role, the nature of their tasks, as well as their rights and responsibilities in TREY's activity.

Volunteer work is the base of student culture. Therefore, it is important to ensure the work is meaningful and rewarding to the volunteers. Volunteers working for TREY must have the chance to impact their community and bring a part of themselves to the student community. TREY must also ensure that all students have equal opportunity to participate in and have an influence on the activity. It is this document's and TREY's volunteer sector's mission to advance the fulfilment of these preconditions.

The development of TREYan student culture and identity is only in its infant phase. TREYan culture is formed of the mosaic of the various student subcultures which make the student culture of Tampere. TREY's volunteer work development supports the development of TREYan student culture and identity by bringing students from different backgrounds to the table to work towards common good.

These ground rules are based on a similar document by the Aalto University Student Union (AYY). The document will be updated as TREY's volunteer culture develops.

The volunteer sector, made up of TREY's board members and employees, is responsible for updating the ground rules for volunteer work as well as introducing them to TREY's employees, volunteers, and people in positions of trust at TREY.

On volunteer duties and bodies

There are several kinds of volunteer work in the student community. These ground rules primarily apply to bodies and volunteers under TREY's Executive Board.

TREY's volunteer work can be roughly divided into two groups. The first group is our volunteers and bodies, which organise and support TREY's activity for the entire student community. The volunteer work ground rules presented in this document were drafted for primarily the volunteers operating under the Board. These volunteers include sections, committees, and helping hands, aka nakki-volunteers.

Sectors develop, plan, and organise their operations rather independently.

Committees, on the other hand, have been given a clear project to plan and execute. Nakki-volunteers execute short-term tasks and plans, and don't necessarily participate in the planning stages.

In addition to the volunteers, TREY's volunteer field includes association operatives, who participate in TREY's councils and forums. Unlike committees, bodies, and nakki-volunteers, councils and forums mainly operate for their members, meaning that they bring together students with similar interests and association duties to, for example, share peer support, exchange knowledge or learn together. A committee is limited to operatives in certain duties, like associations' chairpersons, for example. A forum is an open body aimed at all students in certain association duties but also at all other students interested in the topic. Forums can discuss various different themes, like educational or international affairs, for example.

From a wider perspective, the volunteer field can also include members of committees operating under the Representative Council, tutors, and student representatives in administration (aka hallopedes). The committees execute (statutory) tasks ordered by the Council, which are steered by the Student Union's other steering documents. Selecting hallopedes is a statutory task of the Student Union, and the process is steered by the Standing Order on the Election of Student Representatives. Tutoring activity is defined by a tutoring

cooperation contract between TREY and Tampere University, as well as the tutors' and tutor organisers' courses. For the reasons given above, these ground rules do not focus on committee members, tutors or hallopedes, even though they are sometimes applicable to their operations.

Categories of the volunteer field at TREY

Volunteers

- Section: Develops, plans, and executes its activity rather independently. Appointed by TREY's Executive Board.
- Body: Plans and executes a given project. Appointed by TREY's Executive Board.
- Helping hands aka nakki-volunteers: Execute short-term helping tasks. Appointed by the responsible sector from TREY's office.
- Committee: TREY's other steering documents determines appointing and activity.
- Tutors: Cooperation contract with the university determines appointing and activity.
- Student representatives (hallopedes): The Standing Order on the Election of Student Representatives determines appointing and activity.

Association operatives

- Council: Networking, peer support and training. Formed by operatives in certain association duties (not to be confused with TREY's council of representatives).
- Forums: Networking, peer support and training. Formed by operatives in certain association duties and other interested people.

The rights and obligations of volunteer work

Compiled in the four square below are the rights and obligations of TREY and its volunteers in relation to each other.

Rights and obligations often go hand-in-hand; the rights of the volunteers are TREY's obligations and vice versa. Understanding one's rights and obligations and adhering to them are the key to successful volunteer work.

Volunteer's rights

- The right to equal treatment in all activity.
- The right to receive meaningful and rewarding work that is in line with their job description.
- The right to influence the contents or the manner of executing their job, within the limits of their job description.
- The right to proper orientation, instruction, and support in their duties.

- The right to refrain from doing something that is uncomfortable to them.
- The right to not have to carry too heavy a workload and feel too much of a burden from their volunteer work.

Volunteer's obligations

- The obligation to commit to the agreed upon duty and performing it
- The obligation to operate according to TREY's values and principles when representing TREY.
- The obligation to document their work in the required fashion.

TREY's rights

- The right to determine the guidelines and framework of the volunteers' activity.
- The right to ask for a report on the volunteers' activity.

TREY's obligations

- The obligation to give proper orientation, instruction, and support for performing volunteer tasks.
- The obligation to thank and reward the volunteers in relation to the extent of their duties.

Both TREY and the volunteers also have the right and the obligation to develop

and advance volunteer duties and tasks. All parties have the right and obligation to sufficient and open communication to ensure seamless collaboration.

Within the framework of their duties, a volunteer might produce material that is subject to copyright. Using the material that is produced by the volunteer and is subject to copyright must be agreed upon between the volunteer and TREY. TREY can only use copyrighted material that it has permission to use. A volunteer may also waive their copyright with a verbal agreement and give the material they have produced to TREY to freely use.

In case there are any issues, the volunteer can contact primarily their duty's responsible sector or, if need be, the Secretary General.

The life cycle of a volunteer duty

Considering needs – creating a volunteer duty

A volunteer duty is created after need consideration and the conclusion that TREY's operations are in need of said volunteer work. The board member and/or employee of each sector is responsible for creating their sectors' volunteer duties. TREY's Executive Board and volunteer sector must be informed of new duties.

Recruiting

Volunteers are openly recruited, and recruitment calls are announced through the Student Union's communication channels. Smaller and more short-term nakki-tasks don't necessarily require an open call.

The Board decides on sections' and committees' compositions. Each project's responsible sector decides on recruiting nakki-volunteers.

Recruitment calls must have a clear enough description of the respective duty's tasks, as well as mention of its duration. The duty's duration is determined by the recruiter.

All volunteer work applications and interviews are handled confidentially. Applicants are treated equally and fairly in all phases of the application process.

Selection criteria

Selecting a volunteer has different criteria depending on the duty. The recruiter defines the selection criteria for each volunteer duty. The selection criteria cannot be discriminatory. Selections are based on applications and possible interviews, not on the interviewers' prior knowledge of the applicants.

For example, the following criteria may affect the selection:

- Capacity to perform the duty (for example, expertise acquired from studies or factors related to time management)
- Experience in a related position of trust or in other duties
- Motivation towards the duty

Selection criteria may vary, however. Applicants could be chosen in order of applying, for example.

The goal in selecting section and committee members is to form as diverse a group as possible with people from different backgrounds and expertise levels.

Orientation

The ground rules of volunteer work and the tasks in the duty's description are introduced in orientation. It is also good to go through each party's expectations and hopes regarding the duty, and make sure everyone has the same idea and impression of the duty.

Each sector is responsible for the orientation of their volunteers. Volunteers who had the same duty in previous years can be utilized in orientation and training, but the main responsibility is always on the responsible sector.

Working as a volunteer

The core of volunteer work is performing the duty itself. During volunteer work, the volunteer must be guaranteed proper working conditions. All parties must maintain good communication to ensure successful activity and to improve and develop the duty while acting in it.

In principle, the volunteers are expected to commit to the agreed upon duty. If need be, a volunteer's job description can be modified during the duty if, say, the volunteer's situation in life suddenly requires it. In a case like this, the volunteer contacts the responsible sector to reorganise and modify the tasks.

Collecting feedback and feedback conversations

It is important to receive feedback to further improve volunteer activity. It can be collected through, for example, an anonymous feedback form or in conversations between the volunteer and their responsible person. In feedback conversations, one or more volunteers discuss how they feel their duties have gone and how they should be improved and developed. All feedback conversations are confidential. Depending on, for example, the duration of the duty, there can be several feedback conversations. It is recommended for the responsible person to collectively respond to the feedback, even if it has been collected anonymously.

Documentation and instructing the next volunteer

It is the volunteer's responsibility to document their activity in the required manner. The responsible sector needs to instruct the volunteer in the requirements of documentation from the very beginning of their duty. At the end of the duty, it is the responsible sector's responsibility to instruct the new volunteer. The previous volunteer participating in the orientation and instruction is highly welcome, but it is not required.

Renouncing the duty before its conclusion

A volunteer may renounce their duty prematurely due to, for example, their situation in life. In this situation, the volunteer must contact their responsible sector and inform them of their wish to renounce their duty. The reorganisation of the duty's tasks can be agreed upon separately, but it is primarily the responsible sector's responsibility.

Volunteers, Board members, and employees

Volunteers work in cooperation with TREY's Executive Board and employees. Bodies are typically steered by their sector's respective Board member. The sectors' employees usually work in support of the body rather than steering it. It depends largely on the body how independently oriented they are. A body might also choose to organise tasks and duties within itself and, for example,

select a team leader for themselves.

The volunteers' job description is characteristically different from those of the board members or especially the employees, which can cause challenges and should be prepared for. Board members and employees primarily work during office hours, whereas volunteer work is more of a hobby and is often done outside of office hours. Volunteers might prioritise their studies over their volunteer work, but board and staff members can also have other tasks and obligations outside of their main job description. It's good for all parties to understand the distinctive characteristics of each other's jobs. It is also vital that everyone can trust each other to take care of their tasks and to communicate openly and directly. Going through common working methods at the start of volunteer work helps ensure successful collaboration.

Rewards and benefits

The primary reward of volunteer work is the thanks, delight, and new experiences one gains. Well done work always deserves thanks, especially when done by volunteers, and thanking must be a natural and integral part of our everyday.

Volunteers can be offered parties or other kinds of events to help wind down, or emblems relating to their duty, such as overall patches. Volunteers can also be given a certificate for the work they've done, depending on their duty.

Volunteers may also be entitled to different kinds of benefits, like broader access rights or something similar, but these benefits are always defined beforehand for each duty.

Volunteers are not financially compensated for their work, as the name implies.

Glossary

- Nakki(-task): A singular, helpful volunteer task, like helping set up for an event.
- Nakki-volunteer: Volunteer working a nakki-task.
- Duty: Volunteer work with a defined beginning and end. The duty consists of agreed upon tasks and is supervised by a responsible person or sector.
- Body: Umbrella term for committees, sections, councils, and forums. A group which has been selected to work a specified duty, or which has gathered to discuss a certain subject.
- Volunteer: Anyone doing volunteer work at TREY. Volunteers always have a given duty.