



STUDENTS' ASSOCIATION
OF MACEWAN UNIVERSITY

Guide to Volunteer Management

2026-2027

Contents

Introduction	2
Volunteer Plan.....	2
Recruitment	3
Training	4
Engagement.....	4
Retention.....	7
Evaluation.....	8

Introduction

Volunteers are an essential part of any group. Your group may already have informal volunteers that regularly help! Volunteers can contribute to their community without the commitment and liability of being an Executive.

Benefits for the Group:

- Extra hands for tasks, such as putting up posters, decorating, setup and takedown, ideas for logos, and much more!
- Invested members that add valuable input to your meetings.
- Members familiar with the inner workings of the group and have potential to become Executives in the future.

Benefits for Volunteers:

- They can submit Service Hours on Connect to be added to their Student Experience Record (see the Guide to Service Hours for more information).
- They contribute their passion and skills to their chosen community!
- They can become trusted members of the group, helping their chances if they want to become an Executive in the future.

Differences between Volunteers and Executives:

Volunteer	Executive
Provides valuable input for decision making	Makes final decisions for the group
Can assist in the success of some meetings and events	Responsible for the success of all meetings and events
Responsible for their own actions	Responsible for the actions of the group members
Has access as a regular member on Connect	Has access to manage the group on Connect

Volunteer Plan

Before groups take on any volunteers, they should create a volunteer plan. The plan ensures easy coordination of volunteers and avoids confusion.

A solid volunteer plan will include five elements:

1. Recruitment
2. Training

3. Engagement
4. Retention
5. Evaluation

Think of areas where assigning volunteers would allow the executive team to focus more on their main responsibilities.

General questions to ask as a team:

- Where does your group need the most help?
- Where does your group struggle in the event process?
- What would recruiting volunteers look like for your group?
- How much training would your volunteers need?
- When is the best time for your team to delegate tasks?
- How will you contact volunteers, and how can they quickly contact you?
- Which of your executives will manage volunteers?

Recruitment

Students are often looking for opportunities to get involved in their community, make friends, and add experiences to their resumes and CV's. Volunteering is a great way to do all three! Make sure you're advertising it in an engaging and fun way, rather than a job they can apply for.

Tip: Advertise volunteering as a fun opportunity, focusing on the benefits for students.

Use one or more of the following ideas to recruit volunteers or get creative and use your own method.

Ways to Recruit Volunteers:

- Social Media - Use Instagram and Facebook to your advantage! If your group has an active social media presence, you can make a post about recruiting volunteers.
- Email - If you have a large member list, you may want to email the members directly. Use the Messaging function in your Connect Roster to access your members' emails. This method is a great option because you can include all the information volunteers may need, and they can reply to your email to express their interest.
- Tabling - Tabling is a great way to recruit new members and volunteers! Plan your own tabling dates in MacEwan and SAMU spaces by submitting an Event Form. Additionally, you can recruit at the Student Groups Expo, held every September and January. More information about the Expo is in the Student Groups Handbook.
- Physical and Digital Media - Advertise that your group is looking for volunteers on

poster boards and TVs around campus! Create an eye-catching image and submit an Advertising Request Form.

- In-Person Announcements – Announce volunteer opportunities at your group's events and meetings. Utilize current and previous volunteers, if possible.

Tip: Don't forget to include the benefits of volunteering with your group!

Students may want to hear more information about the volunteering opportunity before they commit to being a volunteer. Make sure you have your plan ready to be able to easily answer their questions. Making a pamphlet or a Google document with the information may also be useful!

Training

The depth of training will greatly vary from group to group. Ideally, groups will make attempts to include volunteers in group planning and decision making, which may make training much easier. By “training”, we mainly mean the communication and instruction of tasks that volunteers will be performing.

Groups that mainly need help with events might have tasks like setup/takedown, poster set up, food supervision. These tasks don't need much training besides communicating the expectations.

Awareness groups might want to train their volunteers on how to present specific information to others, or if they cover sensitive topics, how to handle sudden confrontation.

Science groups might train their volunteers on how to do experiments for class demonstrations.

Every group is unique, so include training that reflects your group's specific needs.

Engagement

Communication

Groups should have a dedicated executive that is the main point of contact for volunteers. This promotes consistency, which is necessary for volunteers and the executive team to be on the same page.

It is also important to determine how information is shared with volunteers, to ensure that volunteers receive the most current information.

Communication Options:

- Separate email list for volunteers.
- Group chat (WhatsApp, Discord, etc.)
 - Make sure executives monitor the chat.
- Social media posts (for recruitment).

Scheduling

We recommend setting up a scheduling app like [Calendly](#). Scheduling apps allow your group to create timeslots for different events or tasks that you can invite your volunteers to sign up for. This is a great way to organize a large group of volunteers. Many scheduling apps will also send automatic reminders and notify you if someone cancels.

For smaller groups, you can simply notify your volunteers when you need assistance, and they can respond if they're available.

No matter which method your group uses, make sure you include the following details about each volunteer opportunity:

- The date.
- The start and end time.
- What they will be doing.
- The purpose of the task, such as if it's for an event or to fundraise for a charity.
- Any other special details.

If students do not understand what the task is, they will be hesitant to volunteer. Providing clear descriptions of the activity will get you the most sign ups!

Task Assignment

Volunteers support the group by completing the tasks that the executive team assigns to them.

Assigning tasks is as simple as identifying and filling a need.

1. Identify group needs.
2. Pinpoint the tasks that would fill those needs.
3. Assign volunteers to the tasks.

At Meetings

Groups may want to have meetings, or dedicate a section of their meetings, to volunteer management. You can get input on upcoming events and activities and assign tasks to volunteers.

Assigning tasks at meetings works best for tasks that need to be completed before or after an event (e.g. Poster setup and takedown).

Alternatively, the group Executives can identify the tasks in advance, call for volunteers, then assign tasks at an event.

At Events

When planning an event, groups should make a list of tasks and roles that require volunteers. Example roles include check-in, decorating, coat check, and more. Groups can then assign tasks to volunteers prior to the event.

Groups can also get lanyards and/or name tags to identify volunteers easily.

Does your group have any requirements for your volunteers for the event? For example, are they allowed to drink before or during their volunteer shift? Do they have a dress code to abide by?

Event setup is a good time to get your volunteers together to go over the plan for the event and direct them to their assigned duties.

Tip: Make sure to send out a reminder email before the event confirming that volunteers are still available.

Example Timeline

Before Event:

1. The group holds a meeting to discuss tasks and set up a plan.
2. An email is sent asking for volunteers (including details about the tasks and time requirements).
3. The group performs pre-event tasks.
4. A reminder email is sent to volunteers.

Event Day:

5. Brief check-in with volunteers during setup.
6. Event tasks are completed.

After Event:

7. Post-event tasks are completed.
8. Volunteers are thanked for their time and the group provides information on how to submit their Service Hours.

Skill Matching

People like tasks they are good at, and they like to be where they feel most useful. Get to know your volunteers and match them with the tasks they feel the most confident completing.

Volunteer Trait/Skill	Example Task
Creative/Artistic	Making signs for an event
Outgoing/Friendly	Tabling at the Student Groups Expo
Foodie	Get suggestions for snacks for the next meeting
Business minded	Ask for tips on fundraising

If the task is not engaging, try to assign more than one volunteer to it. For example, putting up posters around campus can be boring. However, if two volunteers meet and get to know each other while doing the task, an hour can feel like five minutes. Volunteering creates a community, so make that community fun and inviting!

Retention

Volunteer retention can be difficult for any organization. Student groups have a great advantage where your volunteers are members themselves. They gain the benefits from the work they put into the group activities.

There are things executives can do to make the experience rewarding for volunteers. Try to incorporate one or more of the following into your volunteer plan so you can have regular, trusted volunteers.

Volunteer Appreciation and Recognition

Recognition for your volunteers is something you **cannot** skip in your volunteer plan. People want to feel appreciated and showing that your group values their input and hard work will go a long way to having dedicated volunteers.

Try including one or more of the following into showing your appreciation for volunteers.

- Volunteer shout outs on social media (with consent).
- Volunteer awards at an end of the semester/year event.
- Prizes for time spent volunteering.
- Branded merchandise.
- Volunteer-only events.
- Thank-you videos to volunteers.

Note: Groups can only use regular funds to buy prizes or gifts.

Development Opportunities

Offering unique development opportunities can be a huge motivation for members to volunteer.

Did you know members can sign up for **Student Group Workshops**? Volunteers might be interested in the First Aid Course or Event Planning 101. These are free training opportunities that you can promote to your volunteers.

Many groups have access to unique networking opportunities that require you to have rapport with the people you invite. Professors, industry leaders, researchers, and sponsors can all be connected to your group and allow volunteers to gain extra value from helping the group.

Group executives can give valuable peer or colleague references for applications. The person in charge of volunteer coordination should discuss with the other Executive Officers if they are willing to do this.

Evaluation

A good executive team will be interested in constantly improving their group. Set up a way to regularly evaluate your volunteer plan to improve the experience of managing your volunteers and the experience of being a volunteer.

Formal (planned) and informal (unplanned) feedback should be considered when evaluating the volunteer experience. Consider incorporating the following:

- Feedback surveys.
- Verbal compliments and concerns.
- Data tracking, such as for the number of no-shows, or how long each person has volunteered.
- Social media polls.
- Meeting discussions.

Even if your group does not receive

Ideas for evaluating each step of your plan:

- Recruitment
 - Has recruitment been successful?
 - Are there more ways you can advertise volunteer opportunities?
- Training
 - How successful has training been?
 - Do you need more training?

- Have students been receptive to your training?
- Engagement
 - Have you successfully skill-matched?
 - Are volunteers enjoying their tasks?
 - Do volunteers seem confused by their tasks?
 - Has communication between volunteers and the executives been smooth?
- Retention
 - Has the group made appreciation/recognition efforts?
 - Were appreciation/recognition efforts received well by volunteers?
 - Has the group provided development opportunities?
 - Were opportunities received well by volunteers?
- Evaluation
 - How could you get formal feedback from volunteers?
 - How are you keeping track of informal feedback? (e.g. word of mouth)