

Policies and Procedures Handbook

Illinois Institute of Technology

Procedure No.: C.5

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Subject: Volunteers and Unpaid Interns

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I. General

IIT values the contributions that volunteers and unpaid interns make to the university community and recognizes that such individuals benefit on a personal or professional level from their service. The following requirements and procedures establish when and how an individual may serve IIT as a volunteer or unpaid intern.

II. Definitions

(A) In general, a “volunteer” is one who performs services (1) for civic, charitable or humanitarian reasons or personal purpose or pleasure; (2) without promise, expectation or receipt of compensation; (3) without any coercion or pressure to do so; and (4) without displacement or replacement of a regular employee. A volunteer derives no substantial or material benefit or advancement, other than altruistic satisfaction, from serving.

(B) In general, an unpaid “intern” (or “trainee”) is one who (1) performs services primarily for his or her own benefit; (2) does not displace or replace regular employees, but works under their supervision; (3) produces no more than minimal value for IIT; (4) understands that he or she is not entitled to wages, benefits or other compensation in connection with the internship; and (5) is not entitled to a position with IIT when the internship ends. An internship is similar in nature to a practicum in that it provides relevant skill development and experience to the intern.

If an individual is to perform services for IIT and fails to meet the definition of a volunteer or an unpaid intern then that person is an “employee” and must be hired.

III. Approval to Place a Volunteer or Unpaid Intern

Anyone seeking to place a volunteer or unpaid intern must submit a request for approval to IIT’s Office of Human Resources prior to: (1) engaging the volunteer or unpaid intern for service; or (2) partnering with an organization to accept volunteer placements or establish an internship program. The placement request, which should be made in writing or by e-mail, must contain the following information:

1. Name of the volunteer or intern, and his or her age, if he or she is younger than 18;
2. Description of services to be performed;
3. Purpose of hosting the volunteer or internship;

4. Where the services are to be performed and the period of service – internships should not exceed 12 weeks and volunteers and unpaid interns should not provide more than 20 hours of services per week;
5. The personal, educational, or professional benefits expected to be derived by the volunteer or unpaid intern;
6. A statement that the services will be provided without compensation of any kind; and
7. How the volunteer or unpaid intern was recruited, or if the volunteer or unpaid intern is being placed at IIT by an outside organization, provide the name, address, and telephone number of the contact person at the organization.

The Department of Human Resources will evaluate the request to determine whether the placement is within the definition of a volunteer or unpaid intern. Notification of approval or denial will be made to the requesting individual in writing or by e-mail. If approval is granted, it will be subject to satisfactory completion of a background check on the volunteer or intern. Such background check will be performed consistent with IIT's then-current policy regarding such matters. (See Procedure No. Q-2 of the IIT Policies and Procedures Handbook.) Volunteers and interns are expected to comply with all applicable IIT policies and procedures, including, without limitation, those related to the placement of relatives and requiring safety training when services will be performed in a lab or other setting involving possible exposure to hazardous materials, machinery or health-related situations.

IV. Agreements/Waivers/Confidentiality

If the placement of the volunteer or unpaid intern is approved, the matter should be referred to the Office of General Counsel to draft any appropriate agreements with the volunteer or intern or affiliation agreement with the organization that seeks to place the volunteer or interns. The required parental consent and/or waiver forms will be prepared if the volunteer or intern is under the age of 18. Depending upon the nature of the services to be provided, a volunteer or intern may also be required to execute a confidentiality agreement.

V. University Identification

For identification card and reporting purposes, individuals should receive the designation "Volunteer" if they are a volunteer, "Program Affiliation-Other" if they are an unpaid intern, or "High School Student" if they are a high school volunteer or unpaid intern. No other designations should be given to such individuals.

VI. Foreign Nationals

In general, non-US citizens who are temporary visa holders may volunteer at IIT, except under the following circumstances:

1. A temporary visa holder who has applied to change status and whose employment authorization from the original status has expired cannot "volunteer" while waiting for a decision on the change of status application.

2. A temporary visa holder working on an Employment Authorization Document (“EAD”) whose document has expired cannot volunteer. The individual must wait until receipt of the new EAD card.
3. A temporary visa holder who has applied for an immigration benefit, such as for permanent resident status and whose previous status has expired, cannot volunteer until receipt of the permanent resident card.
4. An individual on a B-1 Visitor for Business or B-2 Visitor for Recreation/Travel cannot volunteer.