

## MP008 Issue 3

# Volunteer Policy

**Approved by Council**

**Date:** August 2013

**Review:**

August 2015

## Scope

This Policy recognises the importance of volunteers to The Society. It defines the roles of the volunteer, and the responsibilities of both The Society and volunteers to each other.

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Associated Documents: MF003; MP001; MP003; MP004

## **1. Introduction**

The Royal Photographic Society is an educational charity and depends on volunteers to provide the manpower resources to provide or support many of its activities. In addition to governance (Council, Advisory Board and various committees), these activities include its Distinctions, Special Interest Groups and Regional organisations.

## **2. The Role of Volunteers in The Society.**

- 2.1 Volunteers are people who commit time and energy for the benefit of others, they do so freely, through personal choice, and without expectation of financial reward, except for the payment of out of pocket expenses, as defined in MF003.
- 2.2 Volunteers with organisational responsibility are an integral part of The Society's policymaking process and through participation in The Advisory Board ensure that the membership has a voice in policy decisions.
- 2.3 Volunteers are respected and valued and are of equal standing with others in the organisation.
- 2.4 Volunteers are recruited to specific tasks and are not asked to overload themselves with additional roles. All voluntary hours given to The Society are highly valued.
- 2.5 Volunteers are mainly recruited from The Society's membership and in many cases appointed to specific tasks because of their skills and experience. Non members may also be co-opted within the guidelines laid down for the specific tasks involved.
- 2.6 The Society actively encourages membership involvement and the inclusion of volunteers at all levels in the organisation.
- 2.7 The Society wishes to recognise those volunteer members who give valuable service and contribute to the overall success of the Society through their support. They will receive a certificate and badge at intervals of 4 years, 8 years and 12 years service.

## **3. Aims and Objectives**

### **3.1 Special Interest Groups**

The Special Interest Groups exist to provide a focus for activities in specialist areas of photography and imaging. Typically, meetings are organised and specialist magazines are published. These activities are carried out solely by volunteers.

### **3.2 Regions and Chapters**

- 3.2.1 The Regional organisation exists to represent The Society at local level throughout the UK and Ireland. It provides an opportunity for the membership and the general public to attend educational meetings and to take part in Society activities.
- 3.2.2 Overseas Chapters are the means by which members overseas can organise to meet and interact.

### **3.3 Distinctions**

The volunteers serving as Panel members, Panel Chairmen and on the Distinctions Advisory Board provide expertise as assessors and advisors which is central to The Society's Distinctions activities. It is important that the Distinctions are held in high esteem and that this major service the Society provides to the members is provided professionally and sympathetically by senior members of The Society.

## **4. Management Structure of The Society**

The organisation structure is given in document MP001.

## **5. Recruitment Policy**

- 5.1 The Regional and Group committees and officials are recruited through an election process at the AGM of the respective Region or Group.
- 5.2 Distinctions Panel members and Chairmen are recruited on the basis of their experience and on the recommendation of the Distinctions Advisory Board.
- 5.3 Various Advisory Committees are also recruited and appointed by Council.

## **6. Training**

- 6.1 Volunteers running the Regions and Groups will be invited to attend an induction day to cover the main organisational procedures and responsibilities for Society volunteers. These will normally be held twice a year. Also, the Regional Organiser's and Group Chairmen attend meetings where there is an opportunity to exchange ideas on best practice with staff, Council and each other.
- 6.2 Volunteers serving on the Associate and Fellowship assessment Panels are trained 'on the job'. Licentiate Panel members attend training sessions to become familiar with and to practice the scoring system.

## **7. Volunteer Agreement**

The Society wishes to treat its volunteers as well as possible. In order to do this the commitment on both sides is set out in the Appendix.

## **8. Task/Role Descriptions**

Task and roles are defined in Society controlled documented procedures such as Rules and Guidelines. Each volunteer will be made aware of the Guidelines etc relevant the role they have volunteered to undertake.

## **9. Insurance, Health and Safety**

The Society is committed to the highest standard of Health and Safety for its volunteers, staff and members of the public. It is policy that members of the public and staff are not put at risk while on Society premises or while attending Society events at other premises.

Every volunteer must:

- Take reasonable care for his/her Health and Safety and for that of other people who may be affected by his/her actions and be aware of his/her responsibilities.
- Co-operate with The Society in complying with Health and Safety Law.

The Society undertakes to promote the Health and Safety of its staff and volunteers by:

- Maintaining healthy and safe working areas.
- Ensuring that handling, storage, transport of materials is as safe as is reasonably possible.
- Providing instruction, training and supervision as appropriate.
- Ensuring that members of the public are not put at risk while on Society premises.
- Complying with the law on Health and Safety.

## 10. Fire Precautions

Volunteers responsible for organising public meetings must ensure this information is communicated to those attending.

Volunteers need to know the following:

- The location of fire alarm points and how to use them.
- How to contact the emergency services.
- Location of fire extinguishers and how to use them.
- Building emergency exits.
- Fire assembly points.

See also the applicable sections of MP001, MP003 and MP004.

## 11. Confidentiality

Volunteers occasionally may be in possession of information which it is The Society's policy to keep confidential.

This particularly applies to:-

- 10.1 Council or committee debates and decisions where disclosure could affect The Society's legal or financial position or raise sensitive issues for staff and volunteers.
- 10.2 The discussion and results of Distinctions Panel adjudications and in particular for Fellowship adjudications, before the Fellowship Board and Council have reached a final verdict.
- 10.3 Information on failed Distinctions submissions provided to an applicant.

## 11. Volunteers' Expenses

The Society believes that volunteers should not be out of pocket as result of their work. All reasonable out of pocket expenses, approved in advance and, in line with the current guidelines on expenses, will be paid.

## 12. Volunteers and Employees

The Society relies on volunteers and employees working together to achieve the aims of The Society. Volunteer tasks complement the work of paid employees. Volunteer roles do not substitute for paid jobs.

# The Royal Photographic Society Volunteer Agreement

The Society is delighted to accept the voluntary services of:

Name:

Start date:

## **The Society**

Commits to:

- Provide adequate information, training, resources and assistance for volunteers to enable them to meet the responsibilities of their role(s).
- Respect the skills, dignity and individual needs of each volunteer, and to do its best to adjust to these individual requirements.
- Ensure that adequate support is available for volunteers and to provide feedback on performance as appropriate.
- Provide opportunities for volunteers to expand their skills and experience in relation to their role, and to change or take on additional roles.
- Ensure that volunteers are updated on any changes to Society policy or procedures.
- Listen to ideas/feedback from volunteers and take action when appropriate.
- Recognise the service and contribution of volunteers.
- Reimburse agreed volunteer expenses in accordance with Society policy.
- Value and respect volunteers and ensure that staff and volunteers are able to work together to achieve the Society's aims and objectives, as set out in the Strategic Plan.

## **The Volunteer**

Agrees to serve as a volunteer and commits to:

- Take part in training and familiarise themselves with information and resources relevant to their role(s).
- Perform volunteer duties to the best of their skills and ability.
- Access support when needed and accept constructive comments/feedback.
- Support and act in accordance with the Society's policies, practices, procedures, and management decisions.
- Keep in contact with the Society, letting the appropriate person know as soon as possible if their circumstances change or if they are unable to fulfil a commitment.
- Work with other volunteers and staff to achieve the Society's aims and objectives as set out in the Strategic Plan, and accept that ultimate responsibility for Society affairs rests with the trustees and the Chief Executive.

*This agreement is not intended to be a legally binding contract. It may be cancelled at any time at the discretion of either party. Neither party intends any employment relationship to be created, either now or at any time in the future as a result of this agreement.*

Signed on behalf of the Society:

Date:

Volunteer's signature:

Date:

## Appendix 2(i)

### The Royal Photographic Society Volunteer Recognition Scheme

This scheme is to recognise those volunteer members who give valuable service and contribute to the overall success of the Society through their support.

The volunteer will receive a certificate and badge at intervals of 4 years, 8 years and 12 years service.

The following criteria will apply:

- The member is registered as a volunteer on the Society database.
- The member has carried out their volunteer duties as agreed.
- The voluntary service does not need to be consecutive.
- Dual roles carried out simultaneously will count as one measure of service.
- The scheme will recognise current volunteers from March 2013.

The formal presentation of the award will be as follows:

- 4 year and 8 year awards will be sent to the Region and Chapter Organiser, the Chairman of the Special Interest Group or Distinctions Panel as appropriate.
- 12 year awards will be presented by the President or delegated by them to an appropriate member of the Society, e.g. Council Member. Every effort should be made to ensure this presentation is not unduly delayed.
- A short résumé of the service given will also be provided to the presenting officer.
- In addition to receiving a small token of appreciation the service will be published in the Journal.

A template for recording data from departments at Fenton House, Regional and Chapter Organisers and Chairman of the Special Interest Groups is attached.

