

## **Volunteers in Research - Policy & Procedures**

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### **1.0 Purpose**

- 1.1 Qualified volunteers can offer valuable help in laboratory, clinical, or translational research at AUIB. It is essential to safeguard these volunteers from injury or illness, especially as they are not covered by workers' compensation.
- 1.2 This policy details the requirements necessary to ensure protection for both the individual volunteers and AUIB in these circumstances.

### **2.0 Scope**

- 2.1 This policy is applicable to any individual aged 18 or older who wishes to observe or assist in research at AUIB in roles other than as a research subject. This includes both short-term and long-term volunteer experiences and extends to AUIB department heads or research group leaders who are responsible for the proper screening and engagement of volunteers.
- 2.2 This policy does not cover AUIB employees, postdoctoral fellows, or other individuals who have a paid or contractual relationship with AUIB (including non-paid faculty, visiting graduate researchers, and visiting faculty and scholars); AUIB undergraduate students engaged in research for academic credit; and individuals participating as (clinical) research subjects.

### **3.0 Definitions**

- 3.1 Research - an innovative and methodical process of investigation that yields new insights and is disseminated effectively. It covers activities that are crucial for the commercial, industrial, and public sectors, including scholarship; the development of new ideas, images, performances, and artifacts, such as design work, which contribute to novel or greatly enhanced knowledge; and the use of established knowledge in experimental development aimed at creating new or significantly improved materials, devices, products, and processes, including their design and construction.
- 3.2 Representatives/employees/members of AUIB include executive officers, faculty, staff, post-doctoral fellows, professors emeriti, visiting academics, student employees, volunteers, and contractors as specified in contract terms, engaged in activities on behalf of the university.
- 3.3 The term also includes members of the Board of Trustees, Senate, Alumni Council, and other individuals when acting in an official capacity for the university.
- 3.4 Volunteer refers to any individual observing or assisting in research activities at AUIB who is not covered by the exclusions mentioned in this policy.

#### **4.0 Policy**

- 4.1 Prioritize the well-being and safety of volunteers throughout the research process, implementing measures to minimize or eliminate physical, emotional, and psychological risks.
- 4.2 Safeguard the privacy and confidentiality of volunteers' personal information and research data, ensuring that their identities are protected.
- 4.3 Ensure that research is scientifically valid and well-designed to achieve its intended objectives effectively.
- 4.4 Treat all volunteers fairly and equitably thus providing an equal opportunity to all, without discrimination based on race, ethnicity, gender, age, religion, disability, or any other characteristic.
- 4.5 Only individuals who have obtained authorization from the university are permitted to participate in volunteer research activities at AUIB.
- 4.6 Visiting professionals who do not receive compensation from AUIB must be officially appointed by the relevant department as postdoctoral fellows, non-paid faculty, visiting graduate researchers, or visiting faculty and scholars for the duration of their involvement.
- 4.7 Documentation verifying the authorization to volunteer is required. This documentation must explicitly confirm the volunteer's role as an agent representing AUIB.
- 4.8 Individuals awaiting employment, including those pending visa approvals, or desiring to start work before their official start date, are not permitted to volunteer.
- 4.9 The responsibility for the proper screening and engagement of volunteers falls on department heads or research group leaders at AUIB.
- 4.10 It is the duty of department heads or research group leaders to ensure that a university volunteer possesses the necessary experience, qualifications, and training for the tasks they will be performing.
- 4.11 Volunteers at AUIB can include anyone, such as current or retired employees, students, alumni, or other individuals willing to provide services to the university.
- 4.12 An employee of the university is prohibited from volunteering at AUIB in any capacity that duplicates or closely resembles their regular job duties within the university or at AUIB.
- 4.13 AUIB provides indemnification to its volunteers under the same conditions as its employees, specifically for actions or omissions that occur while performing duties or assignments expressly authorized by AUIB.
- 4.14 Generally, payment for volunteer services is not permitted. However, AUIB reimburses its volunteers for actual and reasonable expenses incurred, in accordance with AUIB's

standard reimbursement guidelines, unless otherwise stated in the volunteer agreement.

4.15 AUIB has the option to award an honorarium to a volunteer. An honorarium is not a payment for services performed or fees incurred; instead, it serves to acknowledge distinction or to convey respect, esteem, or appreciation. The amount of the honorarium must not be contingent upon the performance of services.

## **5.0 Procedures**

5.1 The responsibility for the proper screening and engagement of volunteers lies with the department heads or research group leaders at AUIB.

5.2 AUIB volunteers are required to comply with AUIB policies and external regulations that govern their conduct. This includes adhering to ethical standards, maintaining confidentiality, upholding financial responsibility, and adhering to policies regarding drug use.

5.3 The following procedural steps ensure that the selection process is satisfactory:

1. Describe the services/tasks for the AUIB volunteer position before recruitment.
2. Request a complete volunteer profile/CV in writing from any potential volunteer.
3. Ascertain whether the individual is at least eighteen years of age.
4. Invite potential volunteers for interviews and explain the duties and, if appropriate, any further process steps.
5. After accepting the candidate: get in contact with HR, submit the description of the volunteer service position and the volunteer profile/CV, and request a volunteer agreement.
6. Have the volunteer sign the volunteer agreement and provide a copy, with the description of volunteer service attached. Forward a copy of the signed volunteer agreement to HR.

5.4 HR will maintain all documentation related to the procedures mentioned above, along with any attachments, for three years following the date of separation of an AUIB volunteer.

5.5 For certain AUIB volunteers, such as advisory council members, trustees, or reunion chairs, some of the standard steps may not be applicable. If there is a belief that this is the case, it is advised to contact Human Resources for guidance.

## **Related Policies and Documents**

Confidentiality and Privacy Policy

University Archiving Policy

University Publications Policy

Records Retention Management Policy