

# The rules of volunteering

The following is a description of the rules for volunteer work at Aalto University Student Union. The rules describe the “lifecycle” of a volunteer’s activities from recruitment to the end of their job and define the relationship between the recruiter, the recruit and AYY’s permanent organization, as well as support for the activities.

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## 1 Introduction and goals

As part of AYY’s summer project 2010, the workgroup has set a goal of changing Aalto University Student Union from a work community to a volunteer organization. These rules were created in 2010 and updated in 2016.

A work community consists of people with full-time commitment to an organization, whose responsibility towards the organization is based on an employment contract or position of trust. A good work community respects each of its members as an individual, trusts its participants and is generally simultaneously productive and enjoyable.

Volunteering should not be understood here through the traditional Finnish concept; the Finnish meaning of the word needs to be broadened. In French, there are two words for a volunteer: *volontaire* (volunteer) and *bénévole* (unpaid). A person may be working voluntarily, even though they get paid. In this text, a volunteer refers to a *bénévole*, but the whole organization is under development to make everyone a *volontaire*.

A volunteer participates in the activities of the organization out of their own free will, because they feel part of it. Typical features of volunteer organizations include shared values and appreciations, strong inclusion in participation of individual members and a desire to focus operation in a common direction rather than control it from above. Management of a volunteer organization puts equal emphasis on management and direction.

AYY should be developed in a way that gives everyone an opportunity to influence the substance of their own work and goals. This would make volunteers in AYY more like persons sharing the work in a permanent organization than separate actors doing their own “volunteer stuff”.

Volunteers are the heart of the student union. The goal is to ensure that volunteers feel like respected members of the community. Another goal is to support volunteer organs in their everyday work according to the rules of volunteering. The operation of organs shall be prepared and coordinated, and feedback given to the participants. Introduction with tasks, training and communicating the practices and processes of the student union shall be handled appropriately.

The goal of these guidelines is to create a basis for the realization of these goals in the student union.

## 2 The field of volunteers

Although AYY’s field of volunteers can be understood to include both the members of the board and the volunteers doing various jobs, in these guidelines persons holding full-time positions of trust are considered to be employees.

The board shall appoint the sections, committees and workgroups doing volunteer work.

Sections, committees and workgroups operate on many sectors of the student union, and they differ from each other in purpose as well as size. The same rules apply to all, with some modifications.

There are roughly two types of volunteer groups, regardless of what they are called. The student union assembles groups from people doing different types of work directly, and brings together persons doing similar special association work within their own associations. The function of the latter group is to mainly act as a form of support and transfer of information, the former also actively carries out the task of the student union directly under AYY. These rules focus mainly on the implementing groups, but may also be applied to the groups acting as a support function, as applicable.

The makeup of the field of volunteers should not be seen as set in stone; it must be possible to modify it as the situation requires.

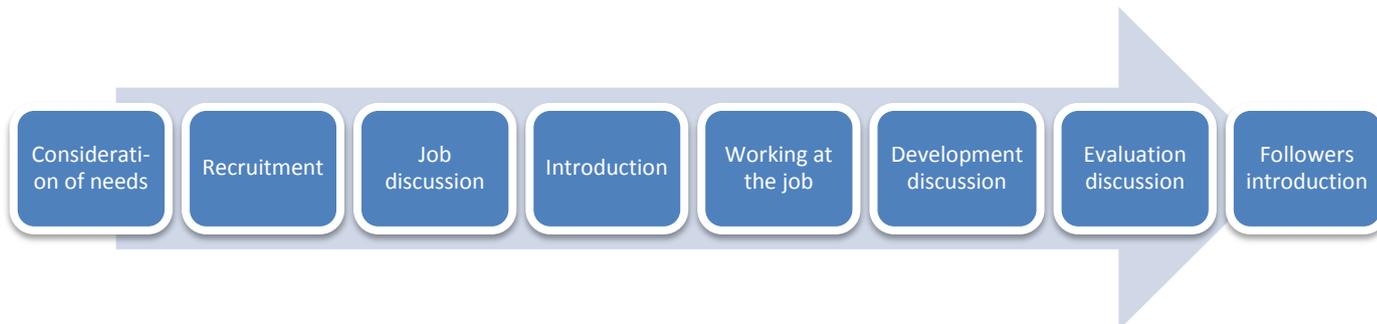
## 3 Rights and responsibilities

In volunteer work, it is important for both the permanent organization and the volunteers to have clearly defined rights and responsibilities. A volunteer has rights to certain things and responsibilities to do certain things, while AYY has a responsibility to offer certain things and a right to expect certain things.

The following can be seen in a way that everyone has a *responsibility* to actively produce certain things and a passive *right* to expect certain things to happen. At the beginning of each job, there will be a job discussion (see 4.3), which will clarify how different rights and responsibilities are realized in this particular job.

AYY (= recruiter)		Volunteer
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>To offer adequate training and instruction for the task</li> <li>To reward and thank</li> <li>To indicate a contact person</li> <li>To evaluate job success</li> <li>To do job, development and evaluation discussions</li> <li>To develop the job</li> </ul>	Responsibilities	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>To take care of the tasks agreed upon</li> <li>To train themselves for the task</li> <li>To document their work for their follower</li> <li>To have discussions with their follower and to familiarize them with the job to the best of their ability</li> <li>To follow AYYE and AYYH’s policies regarding the job</li> <li>To report any grievances to the volunteer trustee</li> <li>To develop the job</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>To hand out tasks within the scope of the job</li> <li>To benefit from volunteer work</li> <li>To develop the job</li> </ul>	Rights	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>To get adequate tools for their work</li> <li>To get compensated for the expenses related to their work</li> <li>To get adequate introduction for their job</li> <li>To not be put under unnecessary mental pressure</li> <li>To develop the job</li> </ul>

## 4 Job lifecycle



### 4.1 Consideration of needs

A volunteer job will be created, if there is a clear need in the operating environment or at AYY for a job suitable for a volunteer. A volunteer job should not be created lightly: each volunteer is important and always takes some of the permanent organization’s time; on the other hand, there is no need to be afraid of creating volunteer jobs, as each additional member in AYY’s “inner circle” makes the voice of the membership stronger in its operation.

Any employee or existing volunteer group may create a volunteer job. The creation of the job is recorded in the minutes of the board or the group (if the minutes are sent to the board). The board must be aware of all jobs created, and of course, the new volunteer should be introduced to the other participants as soon as possible.

### 4.2 Recruitment

Every volunteer in AYY must be recruited openly. Job advertisements must be published in the weekly newsletter as well as the web site, and if necessary, also in the form of posters. Open communication brings us more and better applications, and discrimination is not one of AYY’s principles, anyway.

### 4.3 Job discussion

The purpose of a job discussion is to set the rules of the volunteer job and to review the hopes and expectations of both the recruiter and the recruit. A good job discussion ensures that neither party has misconceptions about “unwritten expectations”.

A job discussion is a confidential, private occasion whose purpose is to create a good basis for future collaboration. Persons participating in the discussion include the recruiter and the recruit, as well as others, if deemed necessary. One should reserve at least 30 minutes in a quiet place with coffee and cake for the discussion. Do not attempt to do the job discussion over the phone or by e-mail – you will lose most of the benefits of the practice.

### 4.4 Introduction

Each volunteer must be introduced with his or her job. Organizing the introduction is primarily the task of the recruiter and the volunteer who worked at the job in the previous year. Especially with jobs starting at the beginning of the year, similar training needs should be considered (e.g. office practices and the AYY organization) and joint trainings organized.

Introduction must provide adequate skills and information for carrying out the job. The details of introduction should be agreed upon during job discussion.

### 4.5 Working at the job

The most important (and rewarding) thing about volunteer work, however, is working at the job itself. The volunteer must be given all the support and security promised during the job discussion, feedback should be given and received, and of course, everyone should have fun. This is also primarily the responsibility of the recruiter. The benefits of different jobs are described in more detail in the table below.



Group/advantages	Free use of AYY's rental facilities	Free use of the car and van	Free use of other resources	An AYY computer account	Training at AYY	Key to the AYY office	Access to the 'vault'	Borrowing the storage keys	Named employee	VIP-tickets	Opportunity to participate in sector development	Responsibility to participate in sector development	Responsibility to develop the section/committee	A budget for self-organized recreational activities	Recreation for volunteers 2 times/year	Recreation for sections 2 times/year	Sector recreation
Section chair	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x
Sections	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x			x	x	x		
Committee chair	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x			x		x	x			
Recruited committee	x	x	x	x	x						x		x	x			
Assembling committee	x	x	x							x			x				

**4.6 Development discussion**

A development discussion takes place halfway through the job. Participants in the development discussion are the recruiter and recruit. The development discussion is similar to the job discussion – private, confidential and informal.

**4.7 Evaluation discussion**

An evaluation discussion will take place at the end of the job. Like the previously mentioned discussions, the evaluation discussion will be between the recruiter and recruit. The person doing the job in the following year may participate for at least part of the time, but one must remember that this will weaken the confidentiality and openness of the discussion.

**4.8 Followers introduction**

At the end of the job, the recruiter and recruit are responsible for the introduction of the new volunteer. The division of duties shall be agreed upon for example during the evaluation discussion. The recruiter shall ensure that introduction shall be done appropriately, and that the new volunteer has adequate knowledge for doing the job.

**4.9 Reserve**

A well-done job, development and evaluation discussion will commit the volunteer to AYY’s operations and may get them to continue their involvement also in the future. Adequate thanks, feedback and rewarding are also important. Volunteer work is always valuable.

Former participants are an important source of information and support for new volunteers. Volunteers are encouraged to keep in touch with former participants and to update their contact information to maintain these contacts. Former participants can be invited to annual parties or sector meetings.

**5 Relationship between volunteers and employees**

The relationship between volunteers and employees can often be complicated. Employees (not including board members) have fixed working hours and they cannot be required to be flexible with them. On the other hand, an employee has an opportunity to do things a volunteer may not have time or experience for, such as arrangements taking place during office hours or requiring broad expertise (such as permit-related matters).

An employee has a right to expect a volunteer to do what they have promised, but at the same time, a responsibility to understand the volunteer’s limited time resources. An employee is usually not a

volunteer’s superior: in any case, the relationship is more about direction than giving direct orders. One can give orders, too, or even strawberries, for that matter, as long as it has been mutually agreed upon.

A volunteer has a right to expect the employee to do what they have promised, but also a responsibility to respect the employee’s other tasks and conditions of work. A volunteer should note that an experienced employee is a significant resource, who through good collaboration can produce a benefit many times larger than a project worked by a volunteer alone.

The most important thing about the relationship between volunteers and employees is to create rules together that both parties will commit to. This is an important part of job discussion, introduction and working at the job. In development and evaluation discussions, it would be beneficial to utilize a volunteer’s fresh observations about the permanent organization.

**6 Volunteer trustee**

The volunteer trustee comes from either AYY’s permanent organization or from the outside. The task of the trustee is to ensure that everyone is familiar with the rules and obeys them.

The trustee will ensure that volunteers are treated fairly and equally, and will advise and support volunteers in situations of change and the resolution of problems, if necessary. The trustee will discuss matters related to volunteers with the recruiter, and will participate in the development of the work community together with the volunteers and the recruiters.

The trustee will primarily act as a steward for volunteers and as support for the recruiters. The board will appoint the trustee. The division of duties between the trustee, the board member responsible for volunteers and the sector employee is described in the table below.

Trustee	Board member responsible for volunteers	Sector employee
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Ensures that volunteers, members of the board and employees are familiar with the rules</li> <li>Monitors that the rules are followed and intervenes, if necessary</li> <li>Helps with any problem situations</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Organizes training according to plan</li> <li>Is responsible for the trainings and materials for volunteers</li> <li>Is responsible for updating the rules and materials</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Supports volunteer work</li> </ul>

**7 Volunteer administration**

**7.1 Creating a job**

A volunteer job can be created by an employee, board member or group of volunteers. If a board member or employee creates a volunteer job, it must be noted in the board minutes. If a group of volunteers creates a volunteer job, it must be noted in the group’s minutes and the board must be notified of it. When creating a job, one must consider its effects on the recruiter’s available working hours and budget.

**7.2 Founding a volunteer group**

A volunteer always has his or her own support group. A group can be founded by an employee, board member or group of volunteers. If a board member or employee founds a volunteer group, it must be noted in the board minutes. If a volunteer group founds a group, it must be noted in the group’s minutes and the board must be notified of it.

Recruitment of members of a group is the responsibility of the founder of the group (the chair, if the founder is a volunteer group). When founding a new group, one must consider that the new volunteer group will in practice fully employ one recruiter, whose other tasks must then be reduced. The group must

also be taken into account in budgeting and planning of operations, and if necessary, an extra budget estimate delivered to the general assembly.

**7.3 Abolishing a job**

A volunteer job can be abolished by the board or the volunteer group that created it. The proposal for abolishing the job shall be made by the recruiter.

**7.4 Abolishing a volunteer group**

A volunteer group can be abolished by the board or the volunteer group that created it. The proposal for abolishing the group shall be made by the recruiter of its chair.

**7.5 Thanking and rewarding**

The only salary for volunteer work is the satisfaction of doing the work and receiving thanks for it. Thanks is the salary of a volunteer organization, and paydays cannot be skipped just like that.

Thanking is most efficient when there are as many people present as possible. Thanking is a routine: when a job is well done, thanks are always in place.

When someone has done an exceptional amount of work or done it particularly well, a reward may also be considered. A good reward for a large contribution can be a surprise pizza or a surprise box of chocolates, and a bouquet of flowers always brings a smile. Rewarding should not be confused with bribery: bad management can never be compensated with chocolate, but by admitting and correcting one’s own mistakes.

For a great deed for the entire Aalto community, a badge of merit can be proposed for the volunteer.

**8 Terminology**

These rules contain many different terms. The key terms are defined/explained in the table below.

Term	Definition
<b>Job</b>	A volunteer task with a defined beginning and end. Related to the job are the volunteer working in it, the agreed tasks and forms of support and the recruiter.
<b>Recruiter</b>	The recruiter is the volunteer’s ”superior”, who manages the volunteer’s group, guides the volunteer in their work and ensures that the volunteer has the resources to do their job. The recruiter will have a job discussion, development and evaluation discussion with the volunteer.
<b>Volunteer</b>	A volunteer is anyone who does volunteer work for AYY. A volunteer will always have a job.
<b>Employee</b>	An employee is a person who has a full-time or part-time employment contract or a full-time position of trust in AYY’s permanent organization.
<b>Job discussion</b>	At the beginning of employment, the recruiter and recruit shall have a job discussion, during which the volunteer’s tasks and forms of support shall be defined.
<b>Development discussion</b>	Halfway through the job, the recruiter and recruit shall have a development discussion for evaluating the past, anticipating the future and developing the job.
<b>Evaluation discussion</b>	At the end of employment, the recruiter and recruit shall have an evaluation discussion for evaluating the past, thanking the volunteer for their work and giving guidance to their follower at the job.
<b>Volunteer trustee</b>	The volunteer trustee is a named ”steward” whose task is to ensure that the rules are followed and to listen to the sorrows and joys of the volunteers.