

School of Medicine (SOM) Guidelines for Requesting Volunteers (over 18)
(updated February 2026)

APPLICABILITY:

These guidelines are for Volunteers over the age of 18 in non-faculty and non-fellow roles. Volunteers that fall under this policy are most commonly bachelor's degree seeking students but in rare cases may be master's degree seeking students. If the volunteer candidate is **under** the age of 18, please refer to [the UMB policy regarding Minors \(both paid and volunteer\)](#): If you have an individual who is at the masters level or who is a PhD degree candidate, a research fellow appointment should be considered vs. a Volunteer agreement under this policy. If the individual already has a doctoral degree, a Post-Doctoral Fellow or Faculty appointment should be considered. **Note** that most Fellow positions are either paid or supported by a home institution. Information about faculty and fellow options can be found on the Office of Academic Administration website on the [Volunteer Faculty Appointment](#) and [Fellow Appointment](#) webpages.

PURPOSE:

UMB and the School of Medicine (SOM) provide a variety of educational opportunities and community outreach efforts throughout Maryland. These include the ability to allow volunteers (most commonly undergraduate degree seeking students) to participate in activities at UMB that help them to achieve their educational and career goals.

These guidelines apply to those volunteers (or unpaid "interns") who are not yet prepared for a fellow or faculty position and who are seeking practical educational experiences to enhance their resumes or career development. These guidelines endeavor to allow for the use of volunteers while mitigating certain legal risks and remaining compliant with wage and hour and tax laws that affect employment, including the Department of Labor's Fair Labor Standards Act (FLSA) regulations.



DEFINITION:

Volunteer: For purposes of this policy “volunteer” refers to individuals who are over the age of 18 and are not more suited for a fellow or faculty position. A volunteer is defined as an individual who performs services for civic, charitable, humanitarian or educational purposes, without promise, expectation or receipt of compensation. A volunteer **may not** perform duties (work) that the University would normally pay someone to perform, including lab or research duties, administrative tasks or other duties routinely performed by paid employees.

Based on this definition and the criteria set forth below, requests to have non-faculty/non-fellow volunteers over the age of 18 in the SOM must follow these guidelines and procedures.

PROCEDURES:

The School of Medicine Dean's Office/Human Resources (SOM HR) should be contacted **in advance** of all situations where a volunteer is being considered, or if there are questions regarding the appropriate activities for a volunteer. Requests to bring in a volunteer must be reviewed and approved by SOM HR, prior to any individual starting an unpaid experience. The SOM HR Office will review the request and determine if bringing an individual on as a volunteer is the most appropriate path.

Below are the criteria the SOM uses to determine whether a volunteer opportunity can be approved. These criteria are based on the Department of Labor/FLSA regulations concerning volunteers, The individuals (trainees, students, etc.) are not considered employees (working within the parameters of FLSA) and would therefore be permitted to volunteer only when **all of the following criteria continuously apply:**

1. The volunteer activities are for the benefit of the individual, not the SOM or UMB, and the decision is not made for purposes of fulfilling needed work duties for the institution;
2. The volunteer is not displacing (or replacing) paid employees in Regular, CI or CII status and will be volunteering under close supervision of an existing faculty or staff sponsor;
3. The volunteer understands that they are not entitled to a job once training/volunteering has ended;

4. The volunteer understands that they are not entitled to any wages or other compensation for the time spent volunteering;
5. In most cases, the volunteer is fulfilling the requirements of an established educational course of an accredited school; for licensing or professional experience; and the training is educationally oriented for the benefit of the volunteer; and
6. The experience/internship is similar to training that would be provided in an educational environment even though it includes activities within the actual operation of SOM/UMB facilities.

Once a volunteer request has been approved, the following guidelines apply:

- Volunteers are limited to a **maximum of 20 hours per week**; (exceptions may be requested for review/approval by SOM HR).

- Volunteer approvals are **limited to 6 months** (with a one-time renewal permitted under certain circumstances); Any exceptions may be requested for review/approval by SOM HR).

- Volunteers should not be asked or permitted to perform activities that are dangerous or which require specialized training that the volunteer does not possess.

- The UMB employee (faculty or staff member) who is requesting to have the volunteer will be considered their "sponsor" and is responsible for ensuring that these required criteria are met. The sponsor may be subject to disciplinary action for improper use of volunteer positions.

- The sponsor will provide written documentation to clearly define what the individual will be doing during their time with the SOM, **including the educational benefit** being provided to/for the volunteer.

- The sponsor must ensure that the volunteer completes all required UMB/SOM policy forms, including the **SOM's Volunteer Services Agreement** [SOM Volunteer Application](#) prior to performing any volunteer activities. Sponsors must also ensure the volunteer completes any EHS, HIPPA or other training as needed.

- Volunteers must be eligible/able to work in the US (i.e.: on a VISA status that would permit them to work).

- Volunteers and sponsors must comply with existing UMB policies regarding familial relationships (i.e., not permitted to volunteer directly for/with a member of their own family); and

- In some cases, it may be necessary/prudent for volunteers to sign non-disclosure agreements and/or agreements related to intellectual property (i.e. UMB's Visiting Scientist Agreement). In those cases, please contact the SOM Office of Academic Administration or SOM HR for additional information and direction. You may also review the campus website regarding Visiting Scientists/Scholars for more information:

[Visiting Scientists and Scholars](#)

If you have questions regarding these guidelines or if you need assistance in better understanding the SOM Volunteer processes, please contact the SOM HR Offices: **Jessica Bird**, Executive Director for Human Resources (jbird@som.umaryland.edu) or **Jennifer Galang**, Assistant Director for SOM HR (jgalang@som.umaryland.edu).