Volunteer Policies and Procedures

The Rothney Astrophysical Observatory relies on volunteers to host our many programs and assist with the operations of the observatory. Volunteers provide energy, knowledge and ambiance to our many events. The RAO is committed to providing meaningful, enjoyable and safe volunteer assignments of real value within clear and appropriate programmes of activities.

The University of Calgary recognizes that volunteer contributions enhance the University’s programs and activities. As an organization, we believe that volunteers are vital to the work we do.

Definition of a Volunteer: Individuals who, with or without special training, provide services or assistance to the University without payment of fees, wages or salary and without any expectation of any kind of compensation (except travel costs or meal expenses).

As per University of Calgary policy, volunteers must:

- be over 18 years old; and either
  - have Canadian Citizenship or Permanent Resident Status in Canada; or are a current international student enrolled full time at the University of Calgary and hold a Study Permit. In the latter case, the volunteer activities must be short-term and incidental to their student work.

- RAO volunteers are under no obligation to perform duties and have no expectation of, and do not receive any, remuneration for the time that they spend volunteering for the RAO.

- The relationship between the volunteer and the RAO does not create a legally binding contract or a relationship of employment between the RAO and the volunteer.

- The RAO accepts the volunteers on the understanding that their services are received at its sole discretion, and that a volunteer’s relationship with the RAO may be terminated by either side at any time without notice and for any reason.

Additional Information:

- Volunteer work must be initiated by a University department/faculty and directed by a University employee. At the RAO, volunteer work is initiated by the Department of Physics and Astronomy or the Faculty of Science and is directed by the Director and Education Specialist, or a Technician.

- Under RAO staff direction, the volunteer coordinators are students with official status and they are empowered to offer support and guidance to volunteers.

- Volunteers are often students who are provided with tasks of a short-term nature that are not part of their course work. This work normally requires little or no training and meets the students’ learning objectives. There may also be event-specific volunteers who participate in a one-time event.

- Volunteer opportunities for those other than students are limited both in terms of the tasks involved and the time associated with the volunteer opportunity. These tasks cannot include assignments normally performed by paid employees covered under one of the University’s Collective Agreements.
Orientation to the University of Calgary volunteer requirements

How to sign up

Please access the Better Impact system. Once you have registered with Better Impact and completed the Occupational Health and Safety Online training, you will have access to available volunteer opportunities at the RAO.

Note: It is very important that you understand the RAO is not located on campus. We are located twenty minutes south west of Calgary. We will do our best to help create car pool transportation plans to ensure everyone has access to and from the observatory.

The RAO hosts several late night events. If you are not able to volunteer for an entire length of an event, please advise the volunteer coordinator before the event. We need to ensure all volunteer positions are covered. However, no volunteer is obliged to stay for an entire event or participate in late night events.

Registration

- Complete online registration form on the Better Impact website.
- Submit a resume and cover letter through the Better Impact website.
- Complete Occupation Heath and Safety online training which is required for all volunteers.
- Complete online waiver.

As a volunteer for the Rothney Astrophysical Observatory, you agree to:

- Abide by the policies and procedures of the University of Calgary as outlined in this document and the Occupation Heath and Safety Orientation.
- Attend scheduled orientations and training sessions, as required.
- Notify the appropriate supervisor if you are unable to volunteer.
- Carry out your assigned duties in a reasonable and safe manner.
- Permit the use of your image in marketing or for publication purposes.

Once you have qualified for volunteer status, you will have access to register as a volunteer at an RAO event. You will be contacted by the RAO. At that time, you will be given a volunteer assignment and instructions regarding transportation requirements to the Observatory.

The Rothney Astrophysical Observatory agrees to:

- Provide you with orientation, training, supervision and guidance in your volunteer duties.
- Provide you with a choice of assignments, where possible.
- Provide accident insurance coverage while you are performing your duties in accordance with University of Calgary safety policies.
- Use your personal information to assign duties, maintain records and correspond with you relative to your volunteer activity.