

Who can volunteer at the Centre?

You don't have to be a student at Guelph to volunteer, nor do you have to have any relationship to the campus to be a volunteer at the Centre. In fact we are always trying to extend our services beyond the student community.

Volunteering at GRCGED is open to people of all genders, and those who do not identify with a gender at all.

The priority of the centre, however, is to offer a space for people who are oppressed under patriarchy to access support and resources, be a part of decision-making and build community in a space that is not male-oriented. For this reason, people who were assigned male at birth, who were raised as men and continue to live life as a man (cisgendered men) are not allowed to work in the centre alone or answer the phone while in the centre. Cisgendered men are also not able to become collective members.

Relationship of volunteers to the Centre

The relationship between individuals within the Centre and the Centre as a whole is one of reciprocity. The Centre wouldn't exist without the time, energy, enthusiasm, creativity and dedication of the volunteers; at the same time, the Centre is a space for volunteers to express themselves, interrogate themselves and society, learn and develop skills and analysis, access resources and support.

It is important to remember that GRCGED does not exist in isolation. GRCGED is the sum of its history, social context and the energy, ideas, commitment and work of the volunteers and staff. Any policies between the Centre and volunteers should be seen as a relationship among us, not some relationship to an abstract third party. This means that volunteers have ownership and control within the Centre and are accountable for the Centre to uphold its obligations to individual centre users, volunteers, staff, and the community as a whole.

In this relationship, there are certain expectations of individual volunteers/staff and of the Centre as a whole.

GRCGED commitment to volunteers:

Volunteers can have the following expectations of the Centre as a whole:

- an environment which fosters challenge, development and growth
- orientation and training within the Centre
- an opportunity to participate in any events of the Centre and to be involved in and learn about any aspect of the Centre operations, except activities that are open only to people of a specific identity or those which are excluded under the Collective Agreement (Union agreement with the workers at GRCGED)
- the support and space to bring forward new initiatives, to develop new skills, to expand knowledge and analysis
- access to Centre resources
- space to confront problems and to be agents of change within the centre
- an environment which is actively anti-oppressive
- participation in decision-making (except in confidential matters with respect to staff or which would

jeopardize a person's safety were the matter to become public)

- general regard for one's being and appreciation for one's work
- letters of reference specific to your work in the centre

Volunteers' commitment to the Centre:

Volunteers are generally expected to commit to the following:

- attend the following core workshops: anti-oppression/anti-racism, peer support, intersectional feminism, trans/gender 101
- attend an orientation session with the Volunteer Coordinator
- commit at least 1 regularly scheduled hour a week to staffing the centre
- uphold and contribute to the vision and basis of unity
- participate in at least 1 committee or on-going project or working group
- attend at least 50% of volunteer/collective meetings
- actively participate in and promote the centre and its activities and events
- foster the development and growth of the centre
- be aware of, uphold and contribute to developing centre policies and procedure
- make arrangements for someone to cover your shift in the event that you are unable to make office hours or other commitments
- inform relevant people when unable to attend meetings or fulfill other commitments
- give a month notice before leaving the centre as a volunteer
- keep in touch with the coordinator, the collective and other volunteers

GRCGED understands that everyone has different needs, abilities and availability and therefore not all volunteers will be able to fulfill all of the expectations listed above. In the event that a volunteer is unable to commit to these commitments, it is the responsibility of the volunteer to communicate with the coordinator(s) (and collective where appropriate) to discuss alternative arrangements.

GRCGED acknowledges and is understanding of circumstances such as illness, scheduling conflicts, and personal complications which may cause volunteers to miss office hours, meetings or no longer be able to fulfill their commitments. The collective does not have to know in detail why a member is not present, if it is too personal to disclose. *However, it is the responsibility of the volunteer to make GRCGED aware of the general situation and how long they may be absent.*

New Volunteer Orientation

updated July 2011

The Centre recognizes the importance of a thorough orientation for all new volunteers. To this end, every new volunteer will review and have access to the volunteer manual and will review the volunteer forms including the confidentiality agreement with the Volunteer and Resources Coordinator. When complete, the forms will be kept on file and updated as the volunteer is trained and takes on additional tasks and responsibilities. This is to serve as a contract between the volunteer and the Centre, to keep track of volunteer and collective member commitments (such as workshop attendance) and to provide the Centre coordinators with information for the purposes of writing references for volunteers and collective members.

Orientation of new volunteers will include an:

- overview of the centre and brief student activism history
- introduction to the complete policy manual and supplemental materials such as anti-oppression readings
- orientation to the resource library, cataloguing scheme, how to sign out resources with ResourceMate, duration of loans and how to use Patron Search
- introduction to GRCGED Log Book, where the schedule is kept and be signed up for a regular shift
- orientation to other materials such as Centre minutes, CSA minutes, the wall calendar and colour scheme, the volunteer board, dishes schedule, how to add agenda items for meetings, minute templates, the phone message book, how to book the Centre or equipment, referral lists, resource directories, contacts and extra pamphlets
- overview of how to sell Diva/Bro Cups and other menstrual products, including how to record incoming cash
- overview of the computers, the networked files, photocopiers/scanners
- overview of the "office hours procedure", the safer space protocol, Vision and Basis of Unity, the volunteer policy
- opportunity to ask questions about any other aspects of this manual or the centre in general

Office Hours

Part of every shift should be doing general Centre work so that the responsibility for maintaining the space is shared. The remainder of this time can be spent continuing such work, getting work done for specific Centre working groups or committees or familiarizing yourself more with GRCGED resources.

All volunteers are expected to do the following during their shifts:

Starting Your Shift

- * Sign-in on the sheet in the volunteer log book.
- * Read any recent notes.
- * Check the bulletin board and calendars for messages, notices, etc.
- * Make sure your coat, bag, etc. is out of the way of Centre users and volunteers.

Helping Centre Users

- * Please remember that as much fun as conversations can be at GRCGED that we are here to represent the Centre to new and returning members. Please stop conversations and check in with people when they come to the Centre.
- * Greet and welcome everyone who comes to GRCGED. Don't overdo it, but try to talk to them, show an interest in them and introduce them to GRCGED if they are interested.
- * Help all Centre users find resources, products, referrals or other information.
- * Answer the phone and record and messages.
- * Track Centre usage on the daily log sheet.

Remember, people will only use the space and want to be a part of GRCGED if they feel welcome and supported when they come in.

Ending Your Shift

- * Record work that you do in the logbook and sign out at the end of your shift.
- * Be sure to record and incidents or anything in specific note (i.e. a hostility; people looking for a new product or service, etc.)
- * Make sure to clean up any mess you made and leave notes for others when needed.

Office Hours

Volunteers are expected to spend at least 1 hour a week keeping the Centre open. In order to make sure that general maintenance of the Centre is a shared responsibility, volunteers are expected to spend at least 15 minutes of every shift doing general centre work from the daily/weekly to do lists. The remainder of the shift can be spent continuing to do items or work for a working group, committee or collective tasks. Whatever specific tasks you are doing in the Centre, you are expected to do the following during your shift:

- Sign into the log book
- Check communications, bulletin boards, event calendar, etc.
- Check the to do lists for priorities of the Centre
- Spend at least 15 minutes on general tasks from the daily/weekly tasks
- Assist everyone who comes into the Centre and make them feel comfortable and welcome
- Answer the phone and record any messages
- Track Centre usage on the Stats sheets
- Record the work you do in the logbook (you can leave chatty messages too!)
- Be sure to record any incidents that occur in the Centre or anything of specific note (i.e. people looking for specific products or services)

In addition to the daily/weekly to do tasks, the following are examples of general tasks that can be done during office hours:

- Check and reply to phone mail
- Check in and shelve books
- Do dishes
- Update calendar with events
- Re-stock pamphlets and check that posters are up-to-date in the foyer
- Become familiar with our resources
- Update table, wall, or displays (check to make sure you are undoing recent work and that displays reflect upcoming events or dates)
- Catalogue books once trained
- Create posters, flyers, Facebook events, stickers, etc. to promote upcoming events
- Create general promotion material for the centre (why I like GRCGED, etc.)
- Draft articles, letters, etc. about GRCGED or related topics for local media (pass by volunteer or collective meeting)
- Other tasks on to do list – ask a coordinator for additional tasks if they have all been completed

Accessing the Centre

Centre Space: Any volunteer who has shown a commitment to the centre through regular office hours and involvement in other areas of centre work and who has completed at least 4 of the 6 core workshops can receive the combination to GRCGED key lock box. Anyone receiving this combination must sign the acceptable use policy on the volunteer checklist.* The names of everyone who has the combination will be kept on file. The key lock box is next to the south elevators, across from the CSA office.

Volunteers can use the key to access Centre resources or do work while the Centre is closed, but unless volunteers have all core workshops and are not staffing alone the door must be kept closed and locked. Any volunteer who is working in the centre must sign in, even if it isn't their shift or the Centre is closed.

Any exceptions to the above procedures must be made through a policy change.

Violation of this policy can result in the loss of access to the Centre as a volunteer and service user.

Please take care to clean up after yourself and respect the fact that many different people use the space and resources and that we have this space and resources due to the hard work and effort of decades of labour.

Computers: The computers in the Centre may be used by anyone. Priority will be given to people doing Centre work – especially if they are working to deadlines, people finding resources and referrals for peer support and then general access. Please note that workers may keep active work at specific computer stations and may need to access specific computers at different times.

All GRCGED related files should be saved in the appropriate folder in the “GRCGED” shared files. Please email personal files to yourself and then delete them from the computer. If you need to keep personal files on one of the computers, please let a coordinator know. We try and keep personal files to a minimum to save space and to avoid having orphaned files to deal with later. You can print documents on new or recycled paper – please check the tray before printing – and this can be paid for in the donation jar near the printer at \$.10/page.

If privileges are abused, access may be revoked.

Phone: The phone can be used for Centre business, for people in crisis or short personal calls. All long distance calls must be logged. Personal long distance calls are not permitted.

Mail and Fax: GRCGED has a mailbox at the Central Students Association that needs to be checked at least once a week. The fax number for GRCGED correspondence is 519-837-3722 and can be sent and picked up from University Design and Print in the basement of the University Centre.

*This policy needs to be completed and distributed.

To provide a safe, inclusive, challenging, self-reflective, dynamic, interactive, and creative space within which all people fight against all forms of oppression, including but not limited to: white privilege, white domination, racism, colonialism, ableism, classism, gender oppression, transphobia, intersexed discrimination, queerphobia, patriarchy, etc. through the conscious effort and diverse experience of all Centre Users, Volunteers, and Staff.

Basis of Unity (Revised 2006)

The Centre is a pro-choice, sex-positive environment that operates within an anti-oppressive feminist framework and provides access to information on issues relating to our Vision. The Centre provides a space to meet, discuss, and organize with people on campus and the surrounding community who have made a commitment to the Centre's Vision. First and foremost, the Centre works to create a safer space for students, faculty, Staff, and community members of all or no gender(s), diverse abilities and from a wide variety of ethnic, religious, cultural and linguistic backgrounds. The Guelph Resource Centre for Gender Empowerment and Diversity (GRCGED) functions within a framework of empathy and compassion.

Our purpose includes:

- To promote awareness and education on issues of power-structured relations.
- To understand that the creation of an anti-oppressive environment is an on-going process.
- To make a commitment to continually challenge ourselves to understand our identity and role in social relations of power and oppression.
- To use consensus to give all members the opportunity to participate equally and contribute towards the running of the Centre and decisions affecting GRCGED.
- To support actions that work towards making it possible for all people to live and study safely on a campus free from discrimination and harassment.
- To network and build alliances with like-minded services and groups in the community (as per our Vision).
- To work towards maintaining a respectful, accepting, and welcoming environment where all people who experience gender oppression feel safe and secure.
- To invite people from the University and Guelph communities to attend workshops, speakers, events, etc.
- To facilitate commitment to a politics of resistance, which includes a holistic approach when looking at intersecting social relations of power between gender and race, class, ability, sexuality, etc. This includes interrogation of all forms of oppression, including but not limited to: white privilege, white domination, racism, colonialism, ableism, classism, gender oppression, transphobia, intersexed discrimination, queerphobia, patriarchy, etc. It is important to acknowledge that much of the work done in this area has been done by people who face multiple oppressions.