

A Framework for Good Practice in Working with Volunteers in ESOL



Volunteers make a valuable contribution to supporting adults to learn English, or ESOL (English for Speakers of Other Languages) in Scotland. Volunteers often support low level and hard-to reach learners and offer organisations flexibility in offering additional support to meet extremely varied needs.

The Framework for Good Practice in Working with Volunteers in ESOL aims to be a source of advice and guidance for organisations involving volunteers in their ESOL delivery. It aims to support organisations to reflect on how they work, ensuring a positive experience for volunteers and meaningful progression for learners. It invites organisations to connect with others and share their practice.

Organisations that involve volunteers to support their ESOL delivery have a responsibility to meet the learners' needs and this should be the main focus of any volunteer ESOL project. The organisations also need to ensure that volunteers contributing their time and effort have a fulfilling experience and feel valued and nurtured.

Volunteers are deployed in a variety of roles – language support in the community, classroom assistants, individual and group tutors. Scotland's ESOL strategy states that "Volunteers are supported to be competent and confident in their support role to learners" (p22). 'Support role' is key in that volunteers should not replace paid teaching staff. However, where demand is not being met through fully funded ESOL classes, volunteers often play a part in attempting to meet demand. The framework aims to organisations of any type working with volunteers by connecting them with resources, other projects and ideas for improvement.

The Framework

Following national discussion events on working with volunteers in ESOL, organisations across Scotland agreed that a framework could provide a shared vision of what good practice is and take steps towards ensuring professional support for volunteers and quality of provision for learners.

The framework, developed by ESOL and CLD practitioners from around Scotland aims to raise the profile of volunteers' contribution to ESOL learning, highlighting to funders, organisations and decision makers that investing in volunteers and supporting them to develop in their roles and beyond, has benefits for ESOL learners and the wider community.

This framework is for organisations who involve, or would like to involve, volunteers in supporting their ESOL delivery or to support ESOL learners they work with. Its purpose is to share and learn from the experience of other organisations in Scotland, and to reflect on current practice.

The framework examines 7 themes:

- 1 Volunteer Roles
- 2 Volunteer Recruitment and Selection
- 3 Induction and Initial Training
- 4 Professional Learning and Development
- 5 Coordination, Support and Management
- 6 Making a difference to learners
- 7 Making a difference to volunteers

Each section has good practice goals, suggestions for useful resources, and challenge questions to help organisations reflect on their practice. Examples of good practice and case studies of volunteer

experience also feature and we would invite organisations to continue to contribute to them. Throughout the framework, there is a focus on increasing the diversity of volunteers to better reflect the communities learners live in. The appendices provide more detailed information on potential volunteering roles, minimum requirements, induction training topics, policy suggestions and the volunteer survey that has contributed to the framework's development. Live resources shared by organisations can be found on [CLD Standard's Council i-develop](#)

Development

This work has been developed by Glasgow ESOL Forum and funded through the Scottish Government's Adult Learning and Empowering Communities Fund. Volunteer involving organisations from 23 local authority areas, from local authority, colleges and third sector have been involved in discussion groups hosted by Glasgow ESOL Forum. The outcomes from discussion groups, 2 consultation events, a volunteer survey and volunteer interviews have informed the work and a steering group, led by Glasgow ESOL Forum have developed its content.

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