



## Volunteer Policy

### Intent and purpose of the policy

This policy is intended to provide clarity on the vital role that volunteers play in promoting the work of the Chartered Institute of Linguists (CIOL) and IoL Educational Trust (IoLET), the support that CIOL and IoLET will provide to their volunteers and the behaviours and standards that CIOL and IoLET will show to their volunteers and which they in turn expect from volunteers.

The policy should be read in conjunction with the Code of Conduct for CIOL Council, Committees and Boards and the divisional constitution/society guidelines as applicable.

Questions about the policy should, in the first instance, be directed to Anji Thomas, Executive Officer to the CEO at [anji.thomas@ciol.org.uk](mailto:anji.thomas@ciol.org.uk)

### Vision and mission for volunteering

CIOL is a professional body and membership organisation which represents and works on behalf of its members and the professions in which different languages are used. Volunteers are therefore normally drawn from CIOL members rather than from the general public. IoLET is CIOL's associated charity and is the UK's leading awarding organisation for professional language qualifications. The governing structures of both organisations depend on the voluntary support of members and others who give their time freely in order to promote the aims of CIOL and IoLET. This may involve serving on committees or boards that oversee and support the work of CIOL and IoLET, helping to organise events on behalf of CIOL's divisions and societies, and on occasion, representing CIOL and IoLET at, for example, external events and conferences. The work that volunteers perform is an invaluable way of extending the reach that the organisations can achieve, and both CIOL and IoLET aim to support all volunteers as far as they are able.

### Conduct

CIOL and IoLET expects its staff and volunteers to treat each other with respect, courtesy and honesty. Staff and volunteers have different roles but both work to achieve the aims and objectives of CIOL and IoLET ([link to the website](#)). We expect each to treat the other with fairness and empathy, while being willing to learn and open to change. Other policies have been drawn up which lay down how staff and volunteers should be treated and how they should in turn behave. The Equality, Diversity & Inclusion (ED&I) Policy refers specifically to both staff and volunteers, and is available on the CIOL website [[link](#)] and via CIOL's secure file sharing platform Own Cloud. This Volunteer Policy is also available on the website [[link](#)] together with our Privacy Notice, which outlines how CIOL and IoLET handle personal and/or sensitive data. Support and advice is available from CIOL/IoLET staff. Volunteers may also expect the same level of support that is made available to members of staff in the event of any form of abuse by members of the public in the conduct of their role on behalf of the organisations.



## **Attracting volunteers**

CIOL members are encouraged to put themselves forward for committees and boards, and if eligible, to stand for election to CIOL's Council. They should contact the chairs of divisions and societies if they wish to offer their services, while vacancies on Council, committees and boards are advertised on our website and via other communication channels, such as The Linguist and social media.

## **Recruitment**

Information about how we match and select volunteers for different roles and tasks will be provided at the same time as the vacancy is advertised. The ED&I policy refers specifically to ensuring that recruitment procedures should be fair and free of bias and are based on identifying who is best able to deliver the role or task specified, while encouraging applications from the widest possible spectrum of members/applicants.

## **Induction and training**

CIOL/IoLET will endeavour to provide induction and training to new volunteers. This may include areas such as the role of governing bodies and committees, or financial briefings for those responsible for financial oversight or management. We will consider learning and development opportunities relevant to the role, should they arise, and will conduct skills audits to ensure that there is a suitable match between the skills of volunteers and the needs of the role.

## **Support**

CIOL/IoLET are committed to providing all volunteers with support that is appropriate to their role and responsibilities. This may be through personal contact by phone, e-mail, Skype or face-to-face meetings. It also includes the reimbursement of reasonable travel and subsistence costs incurred in the course of their work for the organisations, subject to the terms of our Travel and Subsistence policy, available via CIOL's Own Cloud. Volunteers are also covered under CIOL/IoLET's insurance policies when taking part in any CIOL/IoLET-related activity. Our Health and Safety policy relates particularly to events and activities at Head Office, but volunteers are expected to apply the same principles to their own environment when they are volunteering. Volunteers are expected to inform staff of any disability or additional needs they have that might affect their work, attendance at events etc., so that the necessary adjustments may be made on their behalf.

## **Recognition and reward**

The contribution that volunteers make to our work cannot be understated. The work that is done by our dedicated volunteers in the name of CIOL/IoLET helps us achieve our aims and objectives and increases the impact and reach of what we do and are able to do. The benefits of volunteering are not financial but we hope that volunteers will find that they work in a supportive environment, that they are able to increase self-confidence, meet new people, gain new skills and rise to new challenges. By volunteering, the individual will make a difference for themselves, for the profession and for the organisations.



## **Experience of volunteers**

CIOL/IoLET welcomes the views and ideas of volunteers as we recognise that volunteers often have a vast store of valuable experience that can help us in our decision-making processes. We also recognise the contribution that volunteers can make in helping us achieve our strategic aims.

## **Communication**

Communications will be by phone, e-mail, Skype, face-to-face contact and/or through the website. Given that volunteers may be located anywhere, the most usual means of communication will be by e-mail, Skype or through the website. Volunteers are welcome to share their experiences of working on behalf of CIOL/IoLET with staff either through the committees and bodies on which they work or direct to staff at Head Office. Staff will endeavour to respond to e-mails promptly and no later than three working days of receipt, although an automated acknowledgement will be provided if they are away from the office for any extended period. Volunteers likewise cannot be expected to be available at all times but are expected to inform relevant staff if they will be absent for extended periods of time, or leave an automated response on their e-mails.

## **Complaints**

CIOL/IoLET takes seriously any complaints that it receives by, or about, volunteers and staff. Any complaint that we receive will be investigated. If the complaint has been received from a volunteer that does not involve a member of staff, it will be investigated by the member of staff responsible for the area of work involved – so a member of IoLET staff if it refers to an examination or by the Membership team if it refers to a membership issue. If a complaint is made by a volunteer about a member of staff, the complaint will be investigated in the first instance by the line manager of the member of staff in question. If the volunteer is not satisfied with the response received, s/he may appeal to the line manager of the line manager, whose decision will be final. If the complaint is about another volunteer, in the first instance the CIOL/IoLET manager responsible for the area of work in which the volunteer is involved will investigate. The complainant and the party about whom the complaint has been made will in all cases be informed of the outcome of the investigation as soon as is reasonably practicable.

## **Disciplinary action**

A volunteer may be asked to step down in the event of a complaint being substantiated or, if the volunteer is a member of CIOL, where the subject matter of the complaint contravenes the standards of behaviour laid down in the Code of Professional Conduct [[link to Code](#)]. In the event of the former, the complaint will be considered by the committee on which the volunteer serves, or by the Head of Membership or Head of Qualifications. Removal of the volunteer is not effective until she/he has been notified in writing of the complaint and of her/his right to respond within 10 working days, and the matter has been considered in the light of any representations made. A volunteer has the right to appeal the decision. The appeal will be heard by the Head of Membership or Head of Qualifications if the decision has been taken by the committee on which the volunteer serves, or by the CEO if the decision



has been taken by Head of Membership or Head of Qualifications. In the event of the latter, the procedures outlined under the Disciplinary framework will apply.

## **Confidentiality**

Volunteers are under a duty of confidentiality to protect the interests and the good name of CIOL and IoLET. There will be occasions when volunteers may be in possession of information that may be sensitive, whether commercially or personally. If volunteers are in doubt as to whether information is confidential, they should err on the side of caution and assume it is confidential until clarification has been obtained from a member of the CIOL/IoLET senior management team. This includes disclosure of sensitive information through social media. Failure to maintain confidentiality will be considered a serious matter and may result in disciplinary action as outlined above.

## **Data protection and records management**

Volunteer records will be stored safely and securely in a way that fully complies with current data protection legislation. CIOL/IoLET's [Privacy Notice](#) provides further details of how we handle your personal data.

Data protection legislation applies to everyone working or volunteering for CIOL; we are all individually responsible for complying with data protection legislation when our role involves dealing with personal data.

Volunteers may handle or have access to personal information. This includes, but is not limited to: names, addresses, telephone numbers, and e-mail addresses – indeed, anything that allows an individual to be identified.

CIOL has a number of legal obligations to protect people's personal information under the Data Protection Act 1998 and the General Data Protection Regulation introduced in May 2018.

Any breach of data protection legislation can have serious consequences for CIOL financially and to our reputation, so it is essential that volunteers are aware of their obligations and follow the correct procedures.

## **Photography**

Photographs are often taken at CIOL/IoLET events and may then be published in The Linguist, on the website or in other publicity material, including social media. They are not used for any other purpose, but CIOL/IoLET requires organisers of its events to ensure that participants can withdraw their permission should they not wish their photographs to be used in this way and that this information is relayed to the Communications and Marketing team.

## **Social media etiquette**

CIOL/IoLET has its own social media policy (available via Own Cloud) which applies to volunteers. It expects certain standards to be met if volunteers use social media as part of their role, and volunteers are expected to remain respectful to CIOL/IoLET, its staff, Council, the IoLET Board, committee and board members, other volunteers and all of its members and clients. All private accounts should be kept separate from those belonging to the



CIOL/loLET. Any volunteer using social media in CIOL/loLET's name should refrain from posting comments that might place the organisations in a difficult position or potentially damage their reputations, and ensure that statements posted in the name of CIOL/loLET are professional in tone and content. If required, clarity on what is or is not considered appropriate can be obtained from Debbie Butler, CIOL Communications and Marketing Manager. Further details may be found in our social media policy and for those who are CIOL members, in the Code of Professional Conduct.

### **Volunteering while claiming welfare benefits**

The only money that volunteers will receive from CIOL/loLET is to cover reasonable out-of-pocket expenses. In most cases, volunteering is unlikely to affect the volunteer's eligibility to claim benefits, but they should check with their benefits adviser in case of doubt.

### **Ending the volunteer arrangement**

The duration of the volunteer arrangement will depend in part on the personal circumstances of the volunteer and in part on the needs of CIOL/loLET. In line with CIOL policy governing the length of service on its committees and boards (including divisions and societies), members and volunteers are required to step down after a maximum of six years to allow participation by others. It is not our policy to provide official references for the work undertaken by our volunteers, although we may confirm the dates and nature of the volunteer role if requested. Volunteers can, of course, step down at any time by giving written notice to CIOL or loLET as appropriate.

### **Volunteer agreement and roles**

When you take on a volunteer role you will be agreeing to abide by this Volunteer Policy and other CIOL/loLET's policies and procedures such as but not limited to:

- Equality, Diversity and Inclusion
- Health and Safety
- Privacy
- Social Media

Information on volunteer roles is reviewed annually, as board and committee positions are confirmed. Reviews include input from existing committee and board members.

### **Monitoring and evaluation**

This policy will be reviewed annually. The views of staff, Council members and of CIOL and loLET volunteers will be sought in conducting the review. The date of the next review is October 2018.