



PhD Volunteer Support Staff

Expectations, Policies, and Guidelines

In order to facilitate an excellent conference, SMS relies on having excellent volunteers. Below is a list of our core expectations for PhD Support Staff Volunteers. All volunteers must acknowledge and adhere to these policies and guidelines.

Qualifications

Volunteers **MUST** be enrolled full-time in their college/university to qualify for this opportunity. Preference will be given to SMS Student Members.

Availability

Volunteers will be scheduled to work approximately 12-15 hours total during the conference on October 17-20. Work hours will be assigned based on SMS needs and each volunteer's availability and presentation schedule. Volunteers must have availability to attend a scheduled virtual and onsite Volunteer Orientation. Be aware that volunteers may be scheduled to work during research presentations, Interest Group & Community sessions, workshops, plenaries, and social events, causing the volunteer to miss some portion of these events. We will make every effort to stagger shifts to ensure that volunteers are able to attend a variety of activities.

Scheduling

Volunteers are responsible for working scheduled shifts and tasks as assigned. SMS staff will determine the best volunteer schedule for everyone based on volunteer availability and conference needs. Volunteers should make sure the volunteer coordinator is aware of any sessions in which they are presenting or any other schedule conflicts with the conference. Schedule changes are made by request only and must be made at least two weeks before the conference. If any changes are needed during the conference, they must be approved by the volunteer coordinator.

Orientation

All volunteers will participate in a scheduled virtual orientation in advance of the conference and an in-person orientation on Saturday morning of the conference. The orientation is designed to provide a framework for volunteering and familiarity with the conference. Volunteer assignments and training will be provided by the volunteer coordinator.



Equipment and Setup

Volunteers must be able to equip themselves with the supplies required for their duties. Equipment needed to fulfill this role includes email access and a mobile device with the ability to download and access the conference event app and a messaging app, such as WhatsApp. A review of technology will be completed during the virtual Volunteer Orientation to ensure that all volunteers are set up for success.

Communication

Volunteers will use tools explained during the virtual orientation session to remain in communication with the volunteer coordinator and SMS staff. This will expediate assistance in situations where a volunteer needs help, a question arises, or a situation moves out of the volunteers' purview and should be handled by SMS staff.

Attendance

Please arrive on time for scheduled shifts and check in with the volunteer coordinator.

Dress Code

The dress code for SMS conferences is business casual. As representatives of the organization, volunteers, like staff, are responsible for presenting a good image to conference registrants and the SMS community. During your volunteer shift, you will be given a uniform component to wear (such as a special badge or vest) that identifies you as conference support.

Duties for PhD Volunteer Support Staff

Volunteer staff should expect to be assigned a variety of responsibilities by the volunteer coordinator. Below is a list of some of the potential volunteer responsibilities. Volunteers should be comfortable participating in any of the responsibilities below.

Hospitality and Directional Support

Volunteers are responsible for providing hospitality support and giving directions to conference attendees as needed throughout the conference. Volunteers need to be very familiar with the venue space, conference app, conference schedule, networking activities, and other items that will contribute to an overall positive conference experience, including information about SMS for first-time attendees. Attendees may expect volunteers to have the answer to everything, so volunteers should familiarize themselves with the FAQs provided at the Volunteer Orientation.

Registration Desk

Volunteers will support attendees as they check-in for the conference, including handing out name badges and conference materials, troubleshooting issues such as a missing name badge or an unregistered guest, and helping attendees download and access the conference app.

Session Support

Volunteers will monitor sessions throughout their assigned shifts to see that everything is functioning well, and that presenters and attendees are able to access the support they need in case of difficulties.

Networking Event and Reception Support

Volunteers may support the social events by ensuring all guests are wearing name badges upon entry, providing directional support, loading buses, and answering basic questions.

Reporting of Issues or Misconduct

Volunteers should alert staff to any technical issues or problems that occur during the conference. For the safety and security of SMS program attendees, volunteers will report to SMS staff any misconduct or harassment witnessed in the in person setting.

Social Media Support

Volunteers may be asked to record quotes or discussion summaries or take photos of some sessions or plenaries for SMS social media platforms.



What do PhD Volunteer Support Staff Receive in Exchange for Their Time?

Our student volunteers receive several benefits, including:

Conference Registration Fee Waiver

Volunteers are provided complimentary admission* to the SMS Annual Conference, which includes access to all conference sessions and events.

**Any volunteer who has already paid for their conference registration will be given a refund upon their appointment to the PhD Volunteer Support Staff role.*

Recognition

Volunteer recognition before, during, and after the conference and exposure within the SMS community!

Certificate

Following the conference, volunteers will receive a certificate of recognition acknowledging their service and contributions as PhD Volunteer Support Staff.

Apply Today!

[Please apply via this online form](#) by **April 17, 2026**. Volunteers will be selected and notified in late April.