

# VISAS Volunteer Attendance Policy

## Purpose

The success of the VISAS program depends on the consistent attendance and active participation of volunteers. Volunteers commit to carving out this time in their schedules, just as they would for an academic class. This policy outlines attendance expectations to ensure the program runs smoothly and learners receive the support they need.

## Attendance Requirements

### 1. Attendance Commitment

- a. Volunteers are required to attend **all scheduled sessions**, arriving on time and staying for the entire duration (including pre-briefs and debriefs).
- b. Volunteers who accumulate more than **two excused absences** or **any unexcused absences** during a semester may be asked to step down from the program for the remainder of the term. Volunteers may reapply for future semesters when they can fully commit to the program's schedule. A history of unexcused absences *may* make volunteers ineligible to participate in future semesters.

### 2. Excused Absences

Excused absences must be communicated **in advance** and approved by the program coordinator. The following are considered excusable:

- a. **Illness** or health-related emergencies.
- b. **Family or personal emergencies** (e.g., bereavement, hospitalization).
- c. **Scheduled exams** or other unavoidable academic conflicts (not last-minute study or group meetings).
- d. **Pre-approved travel** (must be discussed before the semester begins or as soon as plans are confirmed).

### 3. Unexcused Absences

The following are **not valid reasons** for an absence:

- a. Being tired or experiencing stress.
- b. Day-of or short-notice requests (unless due to an emergency).
- c. Last-minute travel or plans (unrelated to emergencies).
- d. Personal appointments (e.g., hair, nails, shopping).
- e. Needing extra time to study or complete assignments.
- f. Group meetings or other activities scheduled outside of class time.

**Note:** Volunteers should recognize that their presence is critical to the success of the program and the learners we support. If volunteers cannot manage their schedule with enough margin to meet these expectations and care for their mental health, they should reconsider their ability to commit to volunteering.

### 4. Two-Strike Rule

- a. If a volunteer accumulates two excused absences, they may be required to meet with program staff to discuss their ability to continue in the program.
- b. Any **unexcused absence** may result in automatic removal from the program for the semester.